

**§ 1944.404**

**7 CFR Ch. XVIII (1-1-09 Edition)**

handicap, age, race, color, national origin, religion, family status, or sex of the head of household. The participating family must be approved for a section 502 RH loan or similar loans from other Federal, state, and private lenders that uses income guidelines substantially similar to the Department of Housing and Urban Development before the start of construction, have sufficient time available to assist in building their own homes, and show a desire to work with other families. Each family in the group must contribute labor on each other's homes to accomplish the 65 percent of the total 100 percent of tasks listed in exhibit B-2 of this subpart. A participating family may use a substitute to perform the labor with prior approval of the Grantee and the FmHA or its successor agency under Public Law 103-354 State Director. A substitute is only permitted when the participating family is incapacitated.

(l) *Self-help.* The construction method by which an individual family utilizes their labor to reduce the construction cost of their home without an exchange of labor between participating families. Unless otherwise authorized by the District Director, this method is only funded for repair and rehabilitation type construction.

(m) *Sponsor.* An existing entity that is willing and able to assist an applicant, with or without charge, in applying for a grant and in carrying out responsibilities under the agreement. Examples of sponsors are local rural electric cooperatives, institutions of higher education, community action agencies and other self-help grantees. Also, when available, regional technical and management assistance contractors may qualify to serve as a sponsor at no charge.

(n) *Technical assistance.* The organizing and supervising of groups of families in the construction of their own homes including:

(1) Recruiting families who are interested in sharing labor in the construction of each other's homes and assisting such families in obtaining housing loans.

(2) Conducting meetings of the families to explain the self-help program and subjects related to home owner-

ship, such as loan payments, taxes, insurance, maintenance, and upkeep of the property.

(3) Helping families in planning and developing activities that lead to the acquisition and development of suitable building sites.

(4) Assisting families in selecting or developing house plans for homes which will meet their needs and which they can afford.

(5) Assisting families in obtaining cost estimates for construction materials and any contracting that may be required.

(6) Providing assistance in the preparation of loan applications.

(7) Providing construction supervision and training for families while they construct their homes.

(8) Providing financial supervision to individual families with section 502 Rural Housing (RH) loans which will minimize the time and effort required by FmHA or its successor agency under Public Law 103-354 in processing borrower expenditures for materials and contract services.

(9) Assisting families in solving other housing problems.

(o) *Termination of a grant.* The cancellation of Federal assistance, in whole or in part, at any time before the date of completion.

**§ 1944.404 Eligibility.**

To receive a grant, the applicant must:

(a) Be an organization as defined in § 1944.403(j) of this subpart.

(b) Have the financial, legal, administrative, and actual capacity to assume and carry out the responsibilities imposed by the Agreement. To meet the requirement of actual capacity it must either:

(1) Have necessary background and experience with proven ability to perform responsibly in the field of mutual self-help or other business management or administrative ventures which indicate an ability to perform responsibility in the field of mutual self-help; or

(2) Be sponsored by an organization with background experience, and ability, which agrees in writing to help the applicant to carry out its responsibilities.

(c) Legally obligate itself to administer TA funds, provide adequate accounting of the expenditure of such funds, and comply with the Agreement and FmHA or its successor agency under Public Law 103-354 regulations.

(d) If the organization is a private nonprofit corporation, be a corporation that:

(1) Is organized under State and local laws.

(2) Is qualified under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986.

(3) Has as one of its purposes the production of affordable housing.

(4) Has a Board of Directors which consist of not less than five.

**§ 1944.405 Authorized use of grant funds.**

(a) Payment of salaries of personnel as authorized in the Agreement.

(b) Payment of necessary and reasonable office expenses such as office rental, office utilities, and office equipment rental. The purchase of office equipment is permissible when the grantee determines it to be more economical than renting. As a general rule, these types of expenses would be classified as indirect costs in multiple funded organizations.

(c) Purchase of office supplies such as paper, pens, pencils, and trade magazines.

(d) Payment of necessary employee benefit costs including but not limited to items such as Worker's Compensation, employer's share of social security, health benefits, and a reasonable tax deferred pension plan for permanent employees.

(e) Purchase, lease, or maintenance of power or specialty tools such as a power saw, electric drill, sabre saw, ladders, and scaffolds, which are needed by the participating families. The participating families, however, are expected to provide their own hand tools such as hammers and handsaws.

(f) Payment of liability insurance and special purpose audit costs associated with self-help activities. These would be considered direct costs, even though the grantee's general liability insurance cost and the cost of audits for the organization are generally indirect costs.

(g) Payment of reasonable fees for training of grantee personnel including board members. This may include the cost of travel and per diem to attend in or out-of-State training as authorized by the board of directors and, when necessary, for the employee to do the current job. These costs are generally direct costs.

(h) Payment of services rendered by a sponsor or other organization after the grant is closed and when it is determined the sponsor can provide the necessary services which will result in an overall reduction in the cost of assistance. Typically, this will be limited to new grantees and an existing grantee for the period of time that its size or activity does not justify a full staff. A full staff is a full or part-time director, project worker, secretary-bookkeeper, and a construction supervisor. This type of cost is generally direct.

(i) Payment of certain consulting and legal costs required in the administration of the grant if such service is not available without cost. This does not include legal expenses for claims against the Federal Government. (Legal costs that may be incurred by the organization for the benefit of the participating families may be paid with prior approval of the State Director).

(j) Payments of the cost of an accountant to set up an accounting system and perform audits that may be required. Generally, these costs are indirect.

(k) Payments of reasonable expenses of board members for attending regular or special board meetings. These costs are indirect.

**§ 1944.406 Prohibited use of grant funds.**

(a) Hiring personnel specifically for the purpose of performing any of the construction work for participating families in the self-help projects.

(b) Buying real estate or building materials or other property of any kind for participating families.

(c) Paying any debts, expenses, or costs which should be the responsibility of the participating families in the self-help projects.